

him, to open the way to the unseen world ; and the ostrich feather received and bore away the king's soul in the breeze that blew it out of sight. This was the celebration of the 'end/ the *sed* feast. The king thus became the dead king, patron of all those who had died in his reign, who were his subjects here and hereafter. He was thus one with Osiris, the king of the dead. This fierce custom became changed, as in other lands, by appointing a deputy king to die in his stead ; which idea survived In the Coptic Abu Nerus, with his tall crown of Upper Egypt, false beard, and sceptre. After the death of the deputy, the real king renewed his life and reign. Henceforward this became the greatest of the royal festivals, the apotheosis of the king during his life, after which he became Osiris upon earth and the patron of the dead in the underworld." /

A similar theory of the Sed festival is maintained by Alexandra another eminent Egyptologist, M. Alexandra Moret. He ^ry^hat says: "In most of the temples of Egypt, of all periods, at the Sed pictures set forth for us the principal scenes of a solemn ^Vking festival called ' festival of the tail/ the Sed festival It con- was sup- sisted essentially in a representation of the ritual death of the dielnd to king followed by his rebirth. In this case the kin ^ is identi- be born

again.

fied with Osiris, the god who in historical times is the hero of the sacred drama of humanity, he who guides us through the three stages of life, death, and rebirth in the other world. Hence, clad in the funeral costume of Osiris, with the tight-fitting garment clinging to him like a shroud, Pharaoh is con- ducted to the tomb; and from it he returns rejuvenated and

reborn like Osiris emerging from the dead.
 How was this
 fiction carried out? how was this miracle
 performed? By
 the sacrifice "of human or animal victims. On
 behalf of the
 king a priest lay down in the skin of the animal
 victim: he
 assumed the posture characteristic of an
 embryo in its
 mother's womb: when he came forth from the
 skin he was
 deemed to be reborn ; and Pharaoh, for whom
 this rite was
 celebrated, was himself reborn, or to adopt the
 Egyptian ex-

¹ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches* 180 sq. ; *The Dying God*, pp.
 151 sq.
in Sinai) p. 185. As to the Coptic For examples of human
 sacrifices
 mock-king see C. B. Klunzinger, *Bilder* offered to prolong the lives
 of kings
aus Oberdgypten ^ der Wuste und dem see below, vol. ii. pp. 219 sqq*
Rothen Meere (Stuttgart, 1877), PP-